

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Stone Joins Effort for Special Session to Protect Property Rights



Fairfield Legislator Requests Legislature Convene Now to Reform Eminent Domain

State Rep. Jack Stone, R-134th, who has called for reform of state eminent domain laws on government taking of private property, has signed a petition formally calling the legislature into special session on the issue.

Rep. Stone said the session is aimed at adopting a moratorium against taking people's property for private development as well as making permanent changes in state law to protect property owners' rights.

The issue arises from a June 23 U.S. Supreme Court decision by a 5-4 vote that authorized the City of New London to acquire private homes by eminent domain to allow development of a hotel and conference center. Homeowners there were recently served with eviction notices.

Calling itself into session is an unusual action, which legislators are initiating because the leadership has not acted on this issue. By the petition process, a majority of legislators themselves can call the legislature into special session.

"One of the most basic elements of America's political system is that people have a right to own their own home," said Rep. Stone. "When government can take property away for a private developer is an alarming use of government power. As representatives of the people, the legislature needs to limit that power now."

He added, "There is a distinction between taking property for a public purpose such as a school and taking someone's house to turn it over to a developer."

On June 28, Rep. Stone and Republican colleagues voted to restrict the use of eminent domain under such circumstances. The measure was defeated along party lines by a vote of 50 - 82.

Rep. Stone said a bill to reform the eminent domain law also was offered during the 2005 legislative session. However, the measure never came up for a vote during the regular

session. Rep. Stone and Republican colleagues offered it as an amendment to a budget bill in the legislature's June 28 special session.

Rep. Stone serves the 70th Assembly District of Naugatuck in the state House of Representatives.